



HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Democratic Caucus

The Honorable John M. Spratt Jr. ■ Ranking Democratic Member

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Statement of John M. Spratt
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I'd like to thank Senator Dorgan for sponsoring this hearing, and as well thank our colleagues, our witnesses, and the audience for attending.

- **Education Funding Gap in the Billions**

The act known as "No Child Left Behind" raises the goals for student achievement in the country's elementary and secondary schools, and imposes substantial mandates.

When this act became law, the President signed it with gusto and acclaim, and promised to support the funding necessary to implement the changes required. That law authorizes \$32 billion this year in aid to economically disadvantaged students---to train teachers, to reform failing schools, to fund after-school programs, to keep students safe, and much more.

- **President's Budget Cuts NCLB**

That's what the law authorizes: \$32 billion. But the President's 2004 budget request does not provide it. His budget actually *cuts* funding for No Child Left Behind next year by \$1.2 billion below this year's enacted level of funding. The President's budget actually *eliminates* 26 programs entirely, including four that go to teacher quality and receive \$101 million, five that go to education technology and receive \$112 million. The President's budget would also wipe out the Comprehensive School Reform program that gets \$233 million, and the rural education program that gets \$168 million, to indicate just a sample of the 26 programs the president would kill.

- **Republican Congress Fails Education Pledge**

In April, the congressional budget resolution promised to increase funding for the Department of Education by \$3 billion. But congressional Republicans have not upheld that pledge. The appropriations bill that House Republicans passed last week does not boost education funding by \$3 billion. It increases funding for No Child Left Behind Act programs by a meager 1.6 percent, about \$8 billion less than what we all said was needed next year to support No Child Left Behind. The bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee is even worse.

No Child Left Behind promised to raise student achievement by training teachers and reducing class sizes. This is what we need to do. Instead, because of a lack of funding, classes are getting bigger, schools are closing earlier, cities are cutting out summer school, and principals are laying off teachers and staff. This is nobody's prescription for helping children learn. Most of the funding for elementary and secondary education comes from states and localities, but when local educators are struggling with their own budget crises, the least the federal government can do is to do what we said we would do.

At a bare minimum, we should fund the \$3 billion increase for education promised in the budget resolution. More responsibly, we should provide the \$8 billion in additional funds that we authorized to meet the goals of No Child Left Behind.

On our first panel, we have two people primarily responsible for federal education reform efforts today. Senator Kennedy and Congressman Miller have led the charge to improve our public schools. They know more than anyone else on this topic, and they have done more than anyone else to further our goal of giving all children a good education.

Our second panel has three witnesses who will address the effects of under-funding "No Child Left Behind." We have Wendy Puriefoy to speak from the perspective of public education across the country, John Porter to speak about the reality in his high school, and Krista Kafer to round out the discussion with a conservative viewpoint.

Senator Dorgan's Remarks

Before we turn to our witnesses, I would like to turn the microphone over to Senator Dorgan for opening comments.